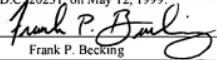


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Frank P. Becking

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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MAY 21 1999

TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700

In the application of:

Barry N. GARDINER, et al.

Serial No.: 08/781,579

Filing Date: January 9, 1997

For: SUTURED STAPLE SURGICAL
FASTENERS, INSTRUMENTS AND
METHODS FOR MINIMALLY
INVASIVE VASCULAR AND
ENDOSCOPIC SURGERY

Examiner: Tina T.D. Pham

Group Art Unit: 3731

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §111

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

This is in response to the Office Action (Paper No. 12) dated November 12, 1998 for which a response was due on February 12, 1999 and for which a 3 month extension of time is requested to extend the time for response from February 12, 1999 to May 12, 1999.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims as follows:

DSUR *EW*
26. (Amended) A surgical staple system for fastening together tissues, or tissue and graft, comprising: